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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Child Development Associate (CDA) training module is to provide guidelines for the CDA intern to use in: (1) becoming aware of and understanding parents' values for their children, (2) recognizing the major role that parents have in their child's education and, (3) helping parents gain more understanding about children and their needs. Objectives are presented along with suggested activities for achieving each objective and an assessment checklist. Also presented is a study guide emphasizing home-school cooperation, family attitudes and background, parent role, and the parent education program. Resources for further study are also included. (Author/MP)

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Competency Based Training Module #11

UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' VALUES FOR THEIR CHILDREN,

AND

RECOGNIZING THE FAMILY AS A PRIME EDUCATOR

by

Cheryl Foster

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NOTE TO THE INTERN:

This CDA training module has been prepared as a guide for you and your CDA Advisor to help you to develop certain practical skills necessary for your work in an early childhood center. Although it contains many useful ideas, it is not intended to be a self-study program. Many decisions about your training experiences are left up to you and your CDA Advisor. The activities given in this module are "suggested" activities, and should be used if they are appropriate to your learning needs. You or your Advisor may come up with other activities more appropriate for your particular situation, children, or background of experience and training.

Your Advisor will evaluate your performance in each of the objectives. S/he may do so right away on the basis of skills you already have, or s/he may evaluate you after you have done some learning activities, or both. If you think you already have the skills required by some of the objectives, you should ask to be evaluated right away. You may not have to do any activities for some of the objectives. You do, however, have to demonstrate the required skills for your advisor; you cannot just tell s/him that you have the skills. If your advisor has already observed some of the skills before you entered this module, s/he may check you off on those skills without further observation.

When your Advisor has evaluated your performance in an objective area as satisfactory, s/he will initial and date that objective as completed in your copy of this module. When all of the objectives have been initialled, you have completed the requirements of this module and have earned credit. Keep this module as your permanent record of completion, and as a reference to use in your classroom.

As you can see, how fast you are able to complete this module depends on a lot of things: how much time and effort you can put into it; how much help your Advisor can give you; how much experience and training you have already had.

The Arizona/Nevada HSST/CDA Program hopes that you find your participation in CDA a valuable and practical training experience. We would appreciate any suggestions you may have for improvements in the training program and in this module.

UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' VALUES FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND RECOGNIZING THE FAMILY AS A PRIME EDUCATOR

CDA TRAINING MODULE #11

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This Module relates to the following CDA Functional Areas:

8 - Self-Concept

9 - Individual Strength

12 - Home Center

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UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' VALUES FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND RECOGNIZING THE FAMILY AS A PRIME EDUCATOR

INTRODUCTION

Participating in a preschool program can be a major step for a young child and his parents. It may or may not be easy for a particular child to adjust to and benefit from this experience. If the preschool program is to fulfill the goal of helping a child progress on the road to becoming a happy, self-reliant individual, it is necessary for home and school to be in harmony with each other in many respects.

A teacher must be aware of the values of the families whom the center is serving. This includes both the general cultural values and the more specific individual family values. It must be recognized that members of the family are the child's primary educators, thus the importance for the best possible coordination of home and school activities.

Parents should not only be involved in the development of the goals of the center's educational program, but they should also be involved, and can be of great assistance, in the day-to-day activities of the center. Parents have much to offer in ways that can greatly enrich the school program.

The purpose of this module is to provide a guideline which an Intern can use in:

1. Becoming aware of and understanding parents' values for their children,
2. recognizing the major role that parents have in their child's education, and
3. helping parents gain more understanding about children and their needs.

OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENT

CDA Intern's Name_____

Date of Entry_____Date of Completion_____

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
1. The Intern will discuss the value of home-school cooperation. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	1. Read Section I of the Study Guide. a. Review Module #10. b. Discuss with your Advisor how home-school cooperation can help the teacher plan for the child.
2. The Intern will be aware of the cultural values of the community being served and will incorporate appropriate elements of the culture into the classroom program. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	2. Read Section II of the Study Guide. a. Discuss with your Advisor several specific values that you perceive as being a part of the culture you are serving. b. Discuss the relationship of your cultural values to those of the children you are teaching. c. List specific examples of the elements of the culture (such as food, stories, songs, and dances) that you use and participate in within your group program. d. Set up activities involving an example in (c) above, carry out the activity with Advisor observation, and evaluate the activity with your Advisor. e. Refer to Module #28.
3. The Intern will obtain from parents information concerning the values and expectations held for their children. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	3. Read Section III of the Study Guide. a. Select methods most appropriate for you to use in compiling information about parents' values and goals for their children. b. Use one or more of the above methods to obtain the specific information from the parents. c. Record and file the information received from the parents in the child's individual folder.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
4. The Intern will involve parents and their ideas when planning the goals and objectives of the center program. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	4. Read Section IV of the Study Guide. a. Set up a group meeting to discuss goals and objectives of the curriculum. b. Meet with parents individually to discuss program goals. c. As lesson plans are formulated, relate parental priorities of goals and values to your plans for their children.
5. The Intern will discuss the meaning of "parent as prime educator" and its implication for the classroom teacher. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	5. Read Section V of the Study Guide. a. Discuss with your Advisor steps you take to ease a child's transition from home to school. b. Discuss with your Advisor how you take the child's family situation into account when planning for and working with the child.
6. The Intern will take steps to help parents feel welcome and comfortable in the center. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	6. Read Section VI of the Study Guide. a. Have your Advisor observe your interaction with parents as they come and go with their children. b. Evaluate with your Advisor the availability of the following: Comfortable seating, bulletin board with notices or information for parents, and any books or pamphlets for browsing or lending.
7. The Intern will involve parents as volunteer helpers in the classroom and use the parents' talents and abilities as sources of enrichment for the classroom program. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	7. Read Section VII of the Study Guide. a. Evaluate the present parent involvement program and discuss possible means of improvement with your Advisor. b. Compile information concerning the availability of volunteer help from parents and information concerning the skills and talents that they would be willing to share. c. Schedule parent help in ways appropriate to your classroom and evaluate the effect of this involvement.

OBJECTIVES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
8. The Intern will be aware of a teacher's professional responsibility concerning a parent education program and will help parents learn more about children and their needs. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	8. Read Section VIII of the Study Guide. a. Discuss with your Advisor your role in helping parents learn more about young children and their needs. b. With the children and the parents of your center in mind, list specific information that should be included in a parent education program. c. With your Advisor and center staff, develop plans for a limited or extensive parent education program. d. Carry through a portion of the program described in (c), evaluate it with your Advisor, and discuss possible future plans.
9. The Intern will be aware of appropriate ideas to consider and measures to take when differences occur between the teacher and the parents. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	9. Read Section IX of the Study Guide. a. Relate the ideas mentioned in the Study Guide to your group of parents. b. With your Advisor discuss specific examples of differences, methods used in solving the problems, and other possible courses of action.
10. The Intern will keep adequate records documenting parent involvement at the center. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	10. Read Section X of the Study Guide. a. With your Advisor discuss a systematic means of recording parent involvement as compared to what is and could be used in your center. b. Initiate a new system for recording parent involvement if this is desirable and appropriate.
11. The Intern will make an implementation plan, stating how the skills and information gained through completing this module will be incorporated into s/his center program. ASSESSMENT _____ date/initial	11. Review with your Advisor the new skills you have gained in fostering home-center coordination. Make an implementation plan, answering these questions: a. In which areas do you need to improve your skills? b. What specific steps can you take to realize those improvements?

OBJECTIVES

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

c. When do you want to review your implementation progress with your Advisor?

Insert your implementation plan into your CDA Portfolio and refer to it periodically to check your own progress.

UNDERSTANDING PARENTS' VALUES FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND
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STUDY GUIDE

I. Cooperation of home and school in promoting the welfare of children can be a key to a center's success.

   A. An exchange of knowledge about the child between parents and teachers enables them to plan well for the child.

      1. Teachers should value a parent's observations of s/his own child and a parent's insight into s/his own child's development as steps are taken to get to know the children in your classroom and provide for their individual needs.

      2. The professional relationship that the teacher can offer the parents can do much for the total development of the child.

   B. It is necessary to respect the deep feelings involved in the parent-child relationship.

      1. Remember that the parent will probably take every comment about his child personally.

      2. A deliberate effort should be made to establish positive feelings with the parents, as this is a starting point for dealing with goals and activities for the child.

II. Become aware of the cultural values of the familes being served, and incorporate appropriate elements of this cultural background into the program. (See Module #28.)

   A. A teacher should become aware of his own cultural background and values in order to avoid unconscious imposition of these personal values upon the families being served.

   B. Within the group program, use food, stories, songs, and dances that reflect the cultural background of the families being served.

III. When center staff understands the goals and values individual families hold for their children, continuity between home and center is promoted.

   A. Families differ, and these differences should be respected.

   B. The family's ways can be respected only as they are understood, and understanding grows out of knowing and caring.

   C. Communicate and interact with parents toward the goal of understanding and considering the priorities of their values for their children.

D. There are several possible ways to find out from parents what values and expectations they hold for their children.

1. Group meetings with pertinent topics planned for discussion.

2. Discussions with individual parents with specific questions asked.

3. Questionnaires that are filled out and returned by the parents.

E. The following are some fruitful areas to explore when obtaining information about parents' values and expectations for their children:

1. The child's play.

2. Eating habits.

3. Sleeping habits.

4. Any limitations that the child may have (physical or otherwise).

5. Parents' expectations concerning the benefits of their child's experience at the early childhood center.

6. Goals and possibilities of future schooling.

F. The following are some specific questions that could help in receiving pertinent information from the parents:

1. What are your child's favorite indoor toys? Outdoor toys? TV programs?

2. Does he have playmates his own age?

3. How does the child relate to the other children in the family?

4. What does the mother enjoy doing most with the child?

5. What does the father enjoy doing most with the child?

6. What duties and responsibilities does your child have at home?

7. What about your child gives you most cause for concern?

8. What benefits would you like your child to receive from his pre-school experience?

IV. Utilize information concerning the values of the cultural background and values of the individual parents when planning the group/individual program.

A. Involve parents in curriculum planning by using group and individual meetings to discuss goals and objectives.

B. Keep a record of the information shared by the parents concerning goals, objectives, expectations, and values, and refer back to these facts as weekly and daily planning takes place.

V. Recognize that the parents and other members of the family play the role of primary educators in the life of the child.

A. The most significant part of the environment of the young child lies in the home and in his family.

B. Anxiety is lessened if the child does not sense a sharp split between home and school; particularly in his first school experience.

C. As a means of promoting support and continuity, encourage parents to bring their child those first few days of school.

D. Perceive each child as a member of his particular family when planning for him and when working with him on a day-to-day basis.

VI. Since the parents play the most important role in the life of a child, help them feel welcome and comfortable in the center.

A. Provide a comfortable place for them to sit while waiting.

B. Provide an attractive bulletin board with notices posted for parents.

C. Provide some magazines and books for browsing or lending if this is possible.

D. Be clear in giving directions about arrangements for visits or acceptable times to bring and call for the child.

E. Take time to point out something of interest that is happening.

VII. Enlist parent help in routine center matters and their participation in special activities.

A. Examples of activities where parents can be of help are:

1. Telling stories.

2. Helping to set up and supervise painting activities or other craft projects.

3. Providing transportation on field trips.

4. Helping with special holiday events.

5. Helping an individual child with extra attention.

6. Working with small groups of children.

B. Let the parents contribute their special talents and strengths to the program of the center.

1. Obtain information concerning the abilities and talents of the parents.

2. Continuity between home life and center life is fostered when parents share their skills with the center group.

C. Help volunteer parent helpers realize:

1. That they can receive invaluable knowledge about their children and child development.

2. The positive benefits that come from a happy fruitful relationship with their own and other young children.

VIII. Utilize your professional relationship with parents and help strengthen their role by offering a parent education program.

A. Help parents gain more understanding about children and their needs (in addition to the intuitive understanding most parents have about their own children).

B. We have a responsibility for sharing our knowledge of child development with parents in a way that does not interfere with their unique knowledge of their own child.

C. What knowledge will be useful to parents and should be included in a parent education program?

1. The values of play and activity for the young child (letting the child touch and explore as much as possible).

2. The kinds of play materials and play experiences that are appropriate at different ages and stages (emphasis on simple and creative equipment).

3. How to make, improvise, or buy good play equipment.

4. The value of play with other children and ways in which a child is helped in getting along with other children.

5. Suggestions concerning how to manage sibling relationships.

6. Information concerning the home duties and responsibilities that can be expected of pre-school children and how such responsibilities can strengthen the self-image of the young child.

7. Ways to help a child develop competence with speech:

a. Importance of talking with a child and listening to his speech.

b. Importance of experiences with books and stories.

8. Information about the way a child learns:

a. Value of answering a child's questions.

b. Helping a child to discover for himself.

9. Understanding about the kind of help that promotes good development:

a. Making suggestions in a positive rather than a negative way.

b. Letting a child take his time.

c. Preparing a child for new or difficult experiences.

d. Playing a supportive rather than a critical role.

10. The importance of putting feeling into words as related to understanding and controlling action.

11. The value of helping a child learn to distinguish between fact and fantasy while still enjoying and using his imagination.

12. Information about development and growth needs (also the underlying causes about certain child behavior) with emphasis on the extent of individual differences in children.

13. References to outside resources when a child has a special need or problem.

14. Importance of aspects of learning for the child:

a. Learning about oneself.

b. Learning about others.

c. Cognitive learning.

D. Help parents learn by giving them opportunities for the following:

1. Observation:

a. A chance to see their child with other children.

b. A chance to get ideas for play activities and ideas for ways of managing situation.

c. A teacher may need to interpret activities and situations.

d. A teacher should give the parent a chance to talk about what has been observed.

2. Discussion - Individual

a. A chance for parents to talk about their own child and raise questions.

b. A chance for a teacher to help parents gain assurance and self-confidence.

(For specifics, see Module #10, Section VI.)

3. Discussion - Group

a. A chance for parents to raise questions.

b. A chance to talk about common problems.

c. Some possible program ideas to use for group meetings: speakers, films, role playing, rap sessions.

d. Parents can share the responsibility for planning group meetings, so that their needs will be more closely met.

E. What benefits can this added knowledge and understanding about growth have for parents?

1. The parents' expectations for the child become more reasonable.

2. Parents can take more interest in their child's development, appreciating both a pattern that is similar to that of other children as well as the ways that their child is a unique individual.

IX. What are some factors to keep in mind when differences arise between the teacher and the parents?

A. Negative feelings will appear but frank discussion is needed so that the differences do not block the growth of more positive attitudes.

B. Recognize the parents' attitude toward the situation even if you do not share that attitude.

C. Put yourself in the parent's situation. Even though you do not agree, can you understand the parent's responses?

D. Work with the family to resolve disagreements between the family's life style with children and the center's handling of child behavior and image of good education.

X. Documentation of parent involvement can aid in the evaluation and improvement of the center program.

A. Keep adequate records which document volunteer hours, parent meetings, and special activities which involve parents.

B. Some possible tools for facilitating this recordkeeping include using a calendar, a card file, forms filed in the child's individual folder, an album of photographs of parents involved in center activities, or a specific record book for parent involvement.

C. Examine these records regularly to evaluate the quantity and quality of the center's parent involvement program, and work with center staff to build and maintain parental interest in the activities of the center.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Baker, Katherine Read. IDEAS THAT WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. Washington, D.C.: National Association For Education of Young Children, 1972, pp. 196-223.

2. Pitcher, Evelyn and others. HELPING YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1974, pp. 9-13.

3. Read, Katherine H. THE NURSERY SCHOOL: A HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS LABORATORY. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, Co., 1971, pp. 38-40, 369-390.

4. THE CDA PROGRAM: A GUIDE FOR TRAINING. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Child Development, 1973, p. 15.